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Planning and Development Committee

March 2, 2009

Testimony of Martin Mador

In Support of

HB 6466 An Act Concerning Projects of Regional Significance

HB 6585 an Act Concerning Regionalism

HB 6467 an Act Concerning Smart Growth and Plans of Conservation and Development

SB 371 an Act Concerning Intermunicipal Cooperation

SB 384 an Act Concerning Regionalism

HB 6465 an Act Concerning Smart Growth and Transportation Planning

In Guarded Support of

HB 6464 an Act Concerning Coordinated Preservation and Development

I am Martin Mador, 130 Highland Ave., Hamden, CT 06518. I am the Legislative and Political Chair of the Connecticut Sierra Club, and am here today representing our 10,000 Connecticut members concerned about the health of our environment, our economic prosperity, and our quality of life. I possess a Master's of Environmental Management degree from Yale.

Connecticut needs a commitment to smart growth. It needs statewide planning, extensive regionalism, promotion of mass transit as it influences land use, a comprehensive land use approvals process without excessive layers. It especially needs regionalism to eliminate the competition for tax revenues which results in environmentally damaging land use decisions. It needs effective environmental protections as an integral part of each of these.

HB 6464 permits the Face of CT Steering Committee to veto grant applications for certain purposes if they feel they do not conform to smart growth principles. While laudable on its face, Sierra is concerned that this adds an additional layer of bureaucracy to the approvals process for these grants. Given the current and projected shortage of agency staff, this could add considerable delay to the grant process. If the smart growth principles used were not carefully and precisely defined, this could add considerable uncertainty to the process. Sierra lauds the goals of this bill, but is concerned about whether the ultimate effects on such priorities as preservation of open space will be as desired by the proponents.

HB 6466 introduces the concept of projects of regional significance, and defines a pre-application process to vet their merits early in the process. Sierra strongly endorses this bill.

HB 6585 promotes the principle of regional cooperation. It authorizes regional economic development, including tax sharing and regional considerations in the Plans of Conservation and Development, and instructs regional Councils of Government to facilitate these agreements. Sierra strongly endorses this bill.

HB 6467 installs smart growth as the concept of choice for addressing land use in the state, and provides a multi-faceted definition which includes, among other priorities, integrated

planning, reduction of reliance on property taxes, development on brownfields rather than greenfields, mass transit, bicycling, transit oriented development, mixed use development, and open space and farmland protection. Sierra considers this a priority bill of considerable importance for the 2009 session.

SB 371 and SB 384 authorize Councils of Government to consider regional tax sharing, delivery of services, contracts, and land use decisions. As they enable key elements of regionalization, Sierra supports both bills.

HB 6465 requires consideration of smart growth principles in any capital transportation project. Sierra endorses this bill.